

Purpose and Objective

Crisis intervention funds allow the Division to address the critical financial and resource needs of families served by the Division. Crisis intervention funds are to be accessed when a family crisis is occurring which may result in child maltreatment. Crisis intervention funds may be provided to:

- Families in a Family-Centered Services caseload or families under investigation/assessment subsequent to a report from the Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline Unit. Crisis intervention funds are also available for families with children in out-of-home care; and
- Families that are receiving one of the above services and are at risk of child maltreatment due to a specified event that is a crisis within their family.

Crisis intervention funds are to be accessed when a family crisis is occurring which may result in child maltreatment. Crisis intervention funds were provided with the belief that some incidents of child maltreatment are directly related to a crisis event in a family's life. These funds are to be accessed when there is a direct correlation between a crisis occurring and the potential for child maltreatment. Crisis intervention funds are one tool Children's Service Workers may use to assist the family through a crisis and, at the same time, provide an opportunity for the family to learn how to handle a similar crisis in the future. Crisis intervention funds are not to be depended upon to remedy all family crises and are to be short-term and time-limited. These funds are to be accessed only when a family's resources to alleviate the crisis have been fully explored and crisis intervention funds are the last option.

For purposes of the crisis intervention funds, the following definitions apply:

- "Crisis" is any event occurring within a family that is significant and in which there is a potential for child maltreatment as a result of that crisis;
- "Crisis intervention funds" are those funds provided to purchase specific items family or family members need to alleviate that crisis;
- "Fiscal agent" is a government entity that has contracted with the Division to maintain crisis intervention funds;
- "County designee" is the person selected, in each county receiving crisis intervention funds, who is authorized to approve requests for funds.

Role of Fiscal Agent, County Designee, and Children's Service Worker

Fiscal agents are responsible for maintaining the crisis intervention fund and working in cooperation with the Division. The fiscal agent will:

1. Write checks upon request;
2. Sustain an audit trail; and
3. Provide invoices on a monthly basis to the county designee.

Each agent will have available funds that can be disbursed immediately (during business hours) upon request. Fiscal agents may receive an administrative fee for the management of the fund.

For each site that has access to crisis intervention funds, a county designee must be chosen. County designees will have the following responsibilities in managing these funds:

1. Review all requests for crisis intervention funds from Children's Service Worker;
2. Assure all required documentation is attached to the request;
3. Approve by signature the request for funds;
4. Maintain a log of funds requested, showing date of request, dollar amount, vendor chosen, worker name, case name, and head of household DCN;
5. Maintain receipts from the purchase(s) made; and
6. Review at the end of the month invoices received from the fiscal agent to "balance" the books.

Within each office a plan must be established as to whom may perform these duties in the absence of the county designee.

The Children's Service Worker who is assigned to the family is to:

1. Determine if there is a direct correlation between the accessing of crisis intervention funds and risk of harm to a child;
2. Be familiar with resources within the community of the family;
3. Explore with the family all possible resources the family may have prior to the request for crisis intervention funds;

4. Assist the family to establish a goal that will remedy the crisis they are facing and map the steps necessary to alleviate that crisis;
5. Complete a CS-16 with the family outlining the steps both the family and the Children's Service Worker will complete to obtain the goal;
6. Provide the guidance and information needed by the family to support them to complete their tasks. Tasks are considered to be educational to the family and applicable to future crises the family may face, they are not to be viewed as simply tasks the family must do to eliminate their crisis;
7. Accompany a family when they are making their purchase, if the family needs this assistance;
8. Obtain receipts from all purchases made with crisis intervention funds and submit them to the county designee for record-keeping purposes; and
9. Complete all necessary forms to make the request for funds, documenting family's resources and needs, maintaining required copies in the case file.

Eligibility

Any family having an open service case in a site that has crisis intervention funds and who is facing a crisis that may impact their ability to care for a child is eligible for the funds.

Families must meet the following criteria:

- Have an open FCS case or be in the process of an investigation/assessment of a report of child maltreatment, and/or
- Have a child in out-of-home care; and
- Have explored all other resources prior to the receipt of crisis intervention funds.

A family is **ineligible** for crisis intervention if:

- They have received crisis intervention funds two (2) times within a six (6) month period; or
- They have received the maximum \$500 from the crisis intervention funds within the previous six (6) months.

Exceptions to these two criteria may be made with supervisory and/or administrative approval.

Eligible Services

Home Repair:

- Minor home repairs may be paid for through crisis intervention funds. Examples are: broken windows, plumbing problems, electrical problems, repairs of furnaces or water heaters, etc. Purchases within this category must be directly related to the risk of harm to the child if such a purchase is made.

NOTE: If the home repair is needed due to imminent risk of placement of the child(ren), Child Welfare Housing Assistance (CWAH) funds must first be explored.

Related Subject: Section 4, Chapter 1, Attachment B, Child Welfare Housing Assistance.
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- When purchasing a home repair, the family should perform as many of the duties involved in making this purchase as possible. Determining the specific repair needed, finding a reputable contractor, obtaining bids, and scheduling the repair are all activities the family can be supported to accomplish and addressed with a CS-16.
- The family should be directed to work within their community to choose a contractor. Specific guidance is to be given to the family regarding verification of reliability of the contractor. References, as well as the Better Business Bureau, may be resources to verify the reputation of a contractor. By directing them to work within their community, they are building a network for future reference.

Child Safety Items:

- Safety items such as those listed below, are not considered as crisis intervention tools, normally. However, having these items available or installed can prevent, or lessen the effects of a crisis. For example a fire does not have to occur for the need for smoke alarms to be installed. If a family has a child that requires a car seat, but does not have one, such an item may be purchased without a "crisis" occurring.

Some possible safety items may be:

- Child-proofing electrical outlets;
- Special locks on doors;
- Telephone; and

- Other items unique to the family's need and the crisis they are facing.
- Prior to the purchase of any safety item, thorough discussion needs to occur with the family members to determine their level of understanding regarding the need for such items. A family should understand the need for an item prior to a purchase being made. A discussion with the family will assess the strengths of the family, their reasoning ability, and their level of understanding of child safety.
- While a CS-16 may not reflect a sequence of events (a crisis may not be occurring prior to this request), staff can still, through the CS-16, address the need for the item, the child safety plan(s), activities to be undertaken that are designed to lead to an understanding of a child safety, etc. An example of a family's task would be to seek out resources, such as a local fire department or whether their landlord may provide smoke alarms for a household.

Health Purchases:

- A family may have health needs that can be addressed through purchasing health items. Examples of possible uses of crisis intervention funds are:
 - Immunizations;
 - Glasses;
 - Lice treatment;
 - Hearing aids;
 - Prescriptions;
 - First aid supplies;
 - Toothpaste/toothbrush;
 - Over-the-counter medications;
 - Humidifiers; and
 - Other items unique to the family's need and the crisis they are facing.
- Children's Service Workers should be sure the family has an identified plan regarding the use, safety, and storage of any items purchased for health needs.
- There may be resources available for particular health needs through the family's community and the family may only need to know how to access them. If the family is unaware of the resources in the community, this is an opportunity for them to learn

how to obtain particular items. For example, immunizations may be provided at low or no cost through the county health clinic. The treatment for head lice is sometimes provided free of charge through health departments or schools.

Employment/School Supplies:

- Items needed to maintain employment or school attendance of a family member may be purchased with crisis intervention funds. Examples of such items would be:
 - Uniforms for employment or school;
 - Appropriate clothing for a child;
 - Alarm clocks;
 - School and employment supplies; and
 - Other items unique to the need of the family in the crisis they are facing.
- In requesting funds to assist a family in maintaining employment or school attendance, it is extremely important for family members to explore with the Children's Service Worker the reason(s) for maintaining them. Determination of self-sufficiency should be fully explored with the family and the ramifications of the family by the loss of employment or education should be fully evaluated by the family.
- The Children's Service Worker is to identify community resources available to meet the family's needs when assisting the family in maintaining employment or schooling. Providing information on community resources (i.e., literacy programs, Futures, school-based programs) provides the family with information regarding their community and helps develop skills to access those resources. Again, these steps may be addressed within the CS-16.

Household Items:

- Household items may be purchased for a family to improve the condition of their residence, when the home presents a health hazard to a child. Household items may include:
 - Beds/bedding;
 - Storage shelves/storage bins;
 - Extermination;
 - Utilities payments;

- Food;
- Major household appliances; and
- Other items unique to the family's need and the crisis they are facing.

NOTE: Utility payments are to be paid with crisis intervention funds only when there is a risk of harm to a child due to lack of utilities. If the child(ren) is at risk of placement due to lack of utilities, Child Welfare Housing Assistance must first be explored.

- Understanding what resources are available within a community provides information to the family for future needs. Helping the family identify their needs and resources allows the family to develop skills and a network base, from which to work.
- Whenever possible, the family should be allowed to choose the items to be purchased. However, this selection should be with guidance from the Children's Service Worker. Families should be encouraged to choose items that will be durable, dependable and economical. Remanufactured items (for appliances) are considered acceptable and such purchases should be encouraged if from a reputable vendor.

Rent/Mortgage in Arrears:

- If a family is at imminent risk of losing a residence due to being in arrears in their rent or mortgage payment, a one-time access of crisis intervention funds may be considered. However, if the children are at risk of placement due to the family being evicted from rental property, child welfare housing assistance funds must first be explored.
- If a request is made to assist a family with rent/mortgage in arrears, every possible resource the family may have to obtain matching funds must be explored. No more than one (1) month's payment may be provided for through crisis intervention funds. Community and family assistance must be sought prior to the request.
- Clear documentation must be provided as to what risk of maltreatment exists to a child if this payment does not occur. A completed CS-16 reflecting what risk exists to a child must accompany any request for rent/mortgage arrears.
- If a child is at risk of placement due to a mortgage in arrears, crisis intervention funds may be accessed for up to the cost of one (1) month's mortgage payment, not to exceed \$500 without administrative approval. A specific plan of payment must accompany a request for funds for this reason. Planning would include negotiating with the lien holder to stop foreclosure actions, a payment plan for "catching up" the balance arrears, as well as a family budget.

NOTE: Child welfare housing assistance funds may not be accessed for mortgage payments.

Transportation:

- Transportation may be provided to a family if a child is at risk of harm due to lack of available transportation. Transportation may be provided for:
 - Employment;
 - School;
 - Medical appointments;
 - Psychiatric/psychological testing;
 - Counseling appointments; and
 - Other appointments that a family may not be able to meet where failure to keep the appointment poses a risk of harm to a child.
- As transportation is often an ongoing challenge to families, problem solving is extremely important when requesting funds to provide transportation. The family will need to develop a network of resources to access transportation in the future. Understanding their community transportation systems and examining reliable resources through the use of ecomaps will help the family when faced with transportation problems in the future.
- Transportation may be purchased for a family through:
 - Cab service;
 - Bus passes;
 - Auto repair; and
 - Gas purchase (including purchase of gas for a friend or relative who transports).
- When a family is purchasing auto repairs, they may purchase any repair that is required to maintain a vehicle in a safe manner. Routine maintenance of a vehicle would not be considered for crisis intervention funds.
- When purchasing vehicle repair for a family, the family is to select a vendor. The Children's Service Worker is to assist the family in making this decision by providing them with information regarding how to choose a reputable and dependable repair

shop. Location/accessibility to the family, reasonable cost and dependability should be explored by the family when making this selection.

Other Purchases:

Other purchases not listed here but which are unique to the needs of a family and which may eliminate the risk of harm to a child may be possible through crisis intervention funds.

Accessing Crisis Intervention Funds

Assessment of Need:

To access crisis intervention funds, the Children's Service Worker assigned to the family must explore with the family all other possible resources for the requested intervention. Areas such as extended family support, community resources, and negotiation or mediation between various parties need to be fully explored with the family prior to a request for crisis intervention funds.

Documentation:

To request crisis intervention funds, a Children's Division (CD) Crisis Fund Authorization form (CS-81) must be completed and submitted to the designee. Attached to this form must be other required documentation, depending upon the program in which the family is currently involved. Crisis intervention funds should be requested to pay for goods or services from a vendor which is selected by the family. Due to financial concerns and the potential impact these funds may have on a family's income, crisis intervention funds are to be made payable to a vendor rather than a family member, whenever this is possible.

Documentation for the various cases should include:

- Investigation/Assessment - If the case is in the investigation/assessment phase, the narrative must reflect what resources the family has or does not have to remedy the current crisis they are facing. Specific information regarding what the need is and what resources were explored with the family before consideration was given to accessing crisis intervention funds must be documented.

Strong consideration should be given to accessing of crisis intervention funds during this first 30 days of contact with the family. Appropriately assessing the immediate needs and resources of the family may prevent the opening of a case for Family-Centered Services. Completion of the CPS-1 will be required to access crisis intervention funds, if they are conducting an initial family assessment or an investigation.

- Family-Centered Services - If the family is receiving Family-Centered Services, documentation of the need for crisis intervention funds is to be part of the CS-16. The sequencing behavior, the ecomap, the services needed, and the what needs to change categories may all be used to reflect the family need.

In conjunction with exploring with the family what resources they have to alleviate the crisis they are facing, planning needs to occur as to what they will do if they face a similar crisis in the future. As part of this exploration and planning, the CS-16 should address future events. A crisis is a time for change and education for a family. The CS-16 should be relevant to this crisis and reflect the specific sequence of events that might lead to child maltreatment.

- Family-Centered Out-of-Home Care Services - Like Family-Centered Services, crisis intervention funds must be tied to the completion of the CS-16, and resolution of the crisis should be reflected in the CS-16. In addition to other program options, this fund may be accessed for a family that is working on reunification, but has experienced a crisis that may prevent reunification from occurring in an expedient manner.

In preparing a CS-16 with the family who is to receive crisis intervention funds, two (2) possible plans may be established. One plan would provide the family with a short-term goal, addressing the immediate crisis they are facing. Steps (family tasks) outlining how to accomplish their goal, as well as supportive tasks of the Children's Service Worker, would be completed in a time-limited manner. The CS-16 should not exceed 90 days. As the goal would be targeted to eliminate an identified crisis, it is likely a CS-16 developed to address the crisis would be dated to run for a much shorter period of time.

Payment Process:

Payments for crisis intervention funds will be made using the CS-65. These payments include the initial payment made to the fiscal agent to establish the crisis fund, reimbursement to the fiscal agent after they have expended from their initial allotment, and the administrative fee paid to the fiscal agent for maintaining the crisis intervention funds. Please see the instructions for the CS-65 process. All CS-65 forms for crisis intervention funds must be sent to the Children's Division Payment Unit in state office for entry. Invoices for services provided must also be attached in order for payment to be made. Copies of invoice/receipts must be retained in the case file. These payments will be processed on the three monthly CSIPS payrolls.